

# Coffee to Go | Proper 28

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

talents, journey, response, risk, Jesus, parable, treasure

## SPEAKERS

Karin Peter, Blake Smith

### **Karin Peter** 00:27

Welcome to Coffee to Go, where we center ourselves in the seasons, scriptures and holy days of the Christian tradition. I'm Karen Peter, and I'm here with Blake Smith. And we welcome you on the journey. So this is our last proper of Ordinary Time before Reign of Christ, which is next week, and that's the last Sunday in the the liturgical or Christian calendar. So today, we are at Proper 28 of Ordinary Time. And remember, ordinary time refers to the numbered or ordered Sundays that fall between Pentecost and Advent. And so, where Jesus is this week, well, apparently, everyone's been gathering in Jerusalem as this is where this scripture takes place. It's towards the end of Jesus ministry. And that's coming right around the corner. And so there's a lot of tension with religious leaders in this part of Matthew's Gospel, because events are rapidly happening. And we will soon come to the end of the ministry of Jesus, pre-crucifixion. So this part is called the parable of the talents. We talked about talents last week, we talked about parables last week. And they are stories that Jesus would tell to make a point. And sometimes they're easy to grasp the point. A little bit harder for us, because we're not Palestinian people in from the first century. So it's a little harder for us to grasp the meaning sometimes, but they didn't always grasp it either, which is made clear. So don't feel bad. If, if you go, I don't have anything. But that means because sometimes I feel that very same thing. So let's, let's hear this parable, it's a little longer than last week.

### **Blake Smith** 02:32

A little bit a little bit. So our Scripture today comes from the Gospel According to Matthew, the 25th chapter, and it is the 14th through the 30th verse.

Where it is as if a man going on a journey summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents. To another two. To another one. To each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once, the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground, and hid his master's money. After a long time, the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents saying, "Master, you handed over to me five talents, see, I have made five more talents." His master said to him, "Well done good and trustworthy slave, you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, Enter into the joy of your master." And the one with the two talents also came forward saying, "Master, you handed over to me two talents. See, I have made two more talents." His master said to

him, "Well done good and trustworthy slave, you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things, Enter into the joy of your master." Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward saying, "Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours?" But His master replied, "You wicked and lazy slave, you knew did you that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter, then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers and on my return, I would have received what was my own with interest. So take the talent from him and give it to the one with the ten talents." For to all those who have more will be given and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have, will be taken away. As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

It's easy in this passage for us to get caught up in, and we've talked about this before in other episodes get caught up in the hyperbole, but I want to, I want to just step away from that and draw our attention to a couple of things. First of all, the passage starts with a man going on a journey. And so we kind of assume, if you read through it, that there's one person going on a journey, and the others are left behind to deal with what they've been given. But today, let's think about that, in terms of, really everybody in the story is on a journey, the man is on a physical journey, he takes off, and he's going away. But these slaves, these disciples, if you will, have been given something of great value. And they have a journey to make, they need to decide what to do with it, how to live it out, to share it, to hide it, whatever it is, and because the one which we would be quick, probably to judge who buried the talent and, out of fear, we need to be honest, I'd be honest with myself and say there are times when I think I've kind of tucked something away for fear of losing it or not being sure what the response would be or what the outcome might be. So I mean, I don't think this slave is way off base. But it is important that we understand what happened with the other two, because they took what they had, and they were willing to risk they weren't. They didn't let fear, stop them, that they were willing to risk something and see what came out of it. And I think that the way the story is told, and we of course, don't know it's a parable, after all, not a real story. But it's almost as if the owner was happier that they tried something, than just tucked it away. I mean, because he says even to the to the third slave, if you thought I was so harsh. If you thought you know that I was did not do what I was supposed to do, you should have at least given it to the bankers and made a little something. The important thing is not doing anything, is not an acceptable response. So we're on this journey, and we've got in the Community of Christ. This the mission prayer, in which we say, God, grant me the courage to risk something new, and become a blessing of your love and peace we can't become without risking something. And these slaves are risking something. So we should think about our own journey. We've been given this tremendous gift, this immeasurable treasure, and the Gospel, this promise of love and hope, and all of that. The question is, where will we journey with it? We're all on a spiritual journey. And so are we going to keep that journey to ourselves, or are we going to share that story? I think this story itself, this parable, encourages us to share our story and rediscover how Jesus works in our life. And we do that by telling our story and sharing with one another and hearing other people's stories and kind of putting that all in context. There are a lot of lonely people in the world. There are a lot of people who might be afraid, they're weary, they're unsure. Maybe if you're listening today, you're an introvert, whatever. When we share our stories in community, when we are on this journey together, it's important for us to understand that Jesus is about community. God is about community. And so in that community we care

for and support one another. So even when we're afraid, we don't have to do it alone. So some questions that come to mind, just take a moment to focus on the perceived harshness by the one slave. And so we might ask ourselves, what are aspects of religion that we sense are harsh? And what? What's our response to that? Do we then go hide? Do we bury our treasure? Or do we take risks? As we look at talents, we might think about what talents have we been given? What are the things that God has blessed us with? And how do we wisely use them to grow and build this treasure we've been given? The other piece is, as we think about our talents, we might ask ourselves the question, what things are we putting off? What acts of compassion and justice do we put off out of fear instead of taking the courageous stuff and risking and then what is what is our response to the holy to this tremendous gift? And am I afraid to share it? So just kind of a variety of questions, different ways of looking at the passage, but some things we might dig a little deeper with.

**Karin Peter 10:07**

So as we, as we think about this, this is this is an interesting passage, for a lot of different reasons. It has some triggers in it, I think, for some people may read certain words. So it's important to take out of it, the whole idea that you shared, which, which really is the point of it, is that doing nothing is an unacceptable response for a disciple. I mean, that's the bottom line. So I appreciate that. We're used to getting in trouble for doing the wrong thing. And this is actually saying do something. Because you do not need as is actually the wrong thing.

**Blake Smith 10:45**

Even if it's wrong, at least you tried.

**Karin Peter 10:48**

You're trying something, even if it's just interest from the bank.

**Blake Smith 10:53**

Somebody recently in a conversation, it might have even been on another podcast. But when we talk about how do we define success? questions is, did you feel God calling you to do it? And did you do the best you could? And if you can answer yes to both of those, then there's some level of success there, even if it didn't come out the way you thought.

**Karin Peter 11:18**

So living with this scripture. This week, I was thinking about how I might want to experience this this week, and how others might. So pick something that you can do and feel pretty comfortable doing something that you can do. So maybe it's telling a part of your own journey story. Or maybe it's being generous and giving of whatever abundance you have. Or maybe it's simply showing up for someone who's having a hard time doing that whole random act of kindness deal, whatever it is something that you can do. Well write it down somewhere so that you see it on a regular basis this week to remind you, and see how many times you can share that talent this week. If your talent is listening to other stories, that see how many times how many stories you can listen to how many times you can use that talent. If your talent is doing random acts of kindness, keep track, try to do some every day and see how many you can do because doing nothing is an unacceptable response. And that's part of our spiritual journey. We keep taking those risks and going forward. So do we have a blessing for today, Blake?

**Blake Smith** 12:36

As always, we do and our blessing today comes from Anne Hillman in *Life Prayers*.

We look with uncertainty beyond the old choices for clear cut answers to a softer, more permeable aliveness, which is every moment at the brink of death. For something new is being born in us if we but let it we stand at a new doorway awaiting that which comes daring to be human creatures, vulnerable to the beauty of existence, learning to love. That's lovely.

So thanks for being with us here this week at coffee to go and we invite you to join us again next week for the next part of our journey through the liturgical seasons and holy days of the Christian tradition.